

PRISONERS ON THEIR WAY OUT OF GERMANY BRING STORIES OF SHEER BRUTALITY AND SHAMEFUL CARELESSNESS

Everywhere in the Country, With the Possible Exception of a Few of the Larger Cities, the Best of Food is in Abundance—People of Germany Look Upon President Wilson as Their Friend Who Will Try to Force Other Countries to Grant Easy Terms.

Treves, Germany, Dec. 10.—With President Wilson en route to Europe for the conference which will lead to the peace table, the British army of occupation here in Germany is being received with the greatest tolerance and consideration.

Wilson, I am informed both by German civilians here and by others fresh from the German interior, is regarded as the peace negotiator who will be inclined to lighten their indemnity burden, as against the Entente negotiators, notably Lloyd George and Clemenceau, who will make every effort to make the Germans pay the highest possible price for the wrong done by "the new defunct military caste."

The people tell you of the terrible starvation in Germany, laying the blame of the Kaiser's militarism, while you are eating the simple meal they have served on the hotel table. Your coffee is sweetened with loaf sugar of excellent quality, your meat, potato and vegetable dishes are piled high, and there is bread as palatable as French bread, and soup as thick and nutritious as if made with meat, potatoes and other vegetables.

You later walk down clean streets where not a single window pane is broken, or a brick displaced, and look into windows filled variously with German officers' caps and spiked helmets, Christmas toys and embroidered handkerchiefs. There are bakery windows filled with frosted cakes and pastries, and you begin to wonder whether the German people know what the word privation means.

You see the streets filled with well-dressed people, including women with furs, men wearing heavy warm overcoats and velvet hats, and children, well clothed and happy, from street wreaths to little girls with furs about their necks walking home from church with their parents.

I saw a group of sixty little girls leaving a schoolhouse today, shouting loudly at an automobile, and in no face was there a sign of privation or starvation.

If you turn your mind back toward Belgium's and France's devastated cities and villages, and the weeping and homeless thousands of men, women and children, actually emaciated with starvation and exposure, and think of France's and Belgium's head civilians so many of whom were wretchedly gassed to death or blown to pieces in their own homes, you also begin to wonder what the actual privation is of these stories we have been hearing from Germany about the dire necessity of being fed and aided by America and the Allies.

I believe that Germany lost the war simply because the German armies were defeated by the heavy fighting of the Allies, and not because of the food situation or starvation and privation in the interior. These conclusions are not based entirely on the appearances in that portion of Prussia now occupied by British troops, but as well on reports I have had from persons fresh from other German cities and communities.

Many Allied prisoners arrived here today, among these well-clothed civilians, in rags and some without hats. They tell stories of brutality and of shameful neglect. They came far from the interior of Germany.

From other sources I have learned that food is available in these interior cities if German marks are forthcoming in sufficient quantities, while officers sent on missions have been gratuitously fed on milk, eggs and meat in the best hotels.

There are some indications that starvation exists in the greater cities, especially in the big munition-making centers, but before the armistice was signed these centers were well taken care of by the Kaiser's government. They are now facing nothing more than has happened many times in our own times and industrial centers caused by the disruption of railroad traffic by occasional strikes or snow storms.

I believe that the stories going out of Berlin on the German wireless, and passing through in various ways, and the entire attitude toward the British troops in Germany today are all part and parcel of an effort to excite American sympathy for its effect at the peace table.

It is as much organized German propaganda as was the propaganda of late against the United States when we entered the war. Herbert Hoover's report on the actual conditions in Germany should be the basis of our sympathy for the bloody hand now extended in friendship and supplication.

I write this not as a correspondent occupying favors from the present German government in Berlin, but as a member of the American army of occupation. Trustworthy information at hand today shows that the government is placing all facilities, including the free use of the wireless and telegraph lines in Berlin and anywhere else, at the disposal of correspondents, who a month ago were writing articles damaging Germany.

HARTLAND

Hartland, Dec. 9.—Mrs. A. D. Kennedy is on a visit to her daughter, Mrs. R. W. Lindsay of Fredericton.

Miss Treves, Alton of Andover, who had just recovered from a severe attack of appendicitis, is spending a few weeks here with her parents, Mr. and Mrs. Andrew Alton, to recuperate.

Miss Ella Kearney, who last week was called to Fredericton by reason of the serious illness of her mother, returned yesterday to her duties as a member of the town's teaching staff, Mrs. Kearney being much improved.

Mr. and Mrs. Arnold Rideout are rejoicing over the arrival of a little

daughter in their home at Somerville. Arthur Dickinson representing Boston Bros. of Bath, has opened an office in the old Observer office.

Brasil Sealey has moved into his new residence at the foot of "Hillcrest." Mr. and Mrs. George Letson have moved into the Plummer house vacated by the Sealeys, while Charles Laskey has taken the flat in the concrete block just vacated by the Letsons.

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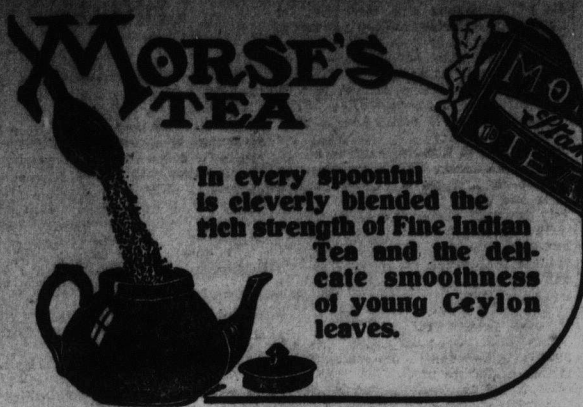
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